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## DEVELOPING CASANOVA'S THEORY AND METHODOLOGY: AN ASSESSMENT OF LATINA AMERICANIST CRITIQUES IN THE ACADEMIC-LITERATURE-WORLD

*Desarrollando la teoría y metodología de Casanova:  
una valoración de las críticas latinoamericanísticas  
en el mundo-literario-académico*

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ABSTRACT: Pascale Casanova's *La République mondiale des lettres* (1999) received many significant critiques from Latin americanists, and yet, there has been little assessment of the soundness and the consequences of these contentions, to conclude whether Casanovian theory and methodology is worth practising, or whether and how it needs to be developed. In favour of this second alternative, I propose a critical assessment of some of the most predominant arguments, bringing them into dialogue with deeper readings of Casanova's work once more in relation to their Bourdieusian roots, comparatively with other world literature theories, and as well as making my own suggestions on how to proceed. After

having considered these critiques, I reflect back on these discussions to sketch how the structures of Casanova's literature-world are also applicable to what I call (following her lead) the *academic-literature-world*.

*Keywords:* world literature; literary theory and methodology; Casanova; Latin American literary criticism; the academy.

RESUMEN: *La République mondiale des lettres* (1999) de Pascale Casanova recibió muchas críticas significativas de latinoamericanistas y, a pesar de estas, ha habido poca valoración de la validez y las consecuencias de estas polémicas, para concluir si la teoría y metodología casanoviana merece ser practicada, o si y como se debería desarrollar. A favor de esta segunda opción, propongo una valoración crítica de algunos de los argumentos más predominantes, retomándolos y haciéndolos dialogar con lecturas más profundas de Casanova respecto a sus raíces bourdieusianas, comparativamente con otras teorías de literatura mundial, y a la vez haciendo sugerencias propias de cómo avanzar este campo. Tras considerar estas críticas, reflexiono sobre este mismo discurso para trazar cómo las estructuras del mundo-literatura de Casanova también se pueden aplicar a lo que yo nombro (siguiendo con la teorización casanoviana) el *mundo-literario-académico*.

*Palabras clave:* literatura mundial; teoría y metodología literarias; Casanova; crítica literaria latinoamericana; la academia.

The rapid rise and status of Pascale Casanova's *Le République mondiale des lettres* (1999) –its worldwide circulation and reception in translation (not without criticisms) and its generation of theoretical and applied research–might tempt one to consider it a canonical work in what could (and will later) be conceived as the academic-literature-world. To be clear, however, this operation would merely replicate the very canon-defining disputes common for over a century in the definition of «World Literature» which the theoretical and methodological shift in approach heralded by Casanova, Franco Moretti, and David Damrosch represented. This theoretical shift was marked by an important change in definition and approach: «world literature» no longer represented an *object* of study (e.g. a canon), but rather a *paradigm* (D'Haen *et al.* 2013). These theorists proposed conceptualisations of world literature as systems or structures, supranational ways of reading with their own methodologies, techniques and considerations. In a few words: theories and methodologies.

This point requires emphasis, because among these critics Casanova, in particular, did not escape the accusation (and prevalent misreading) of not providing an exhaustive account of literatures from across the globe.

This straw-man-like dismissal of her work by ancient historians, postcolonial critics, and national/area studies literary critics clearly interpreted her contribution within the outdated canon-building paradigm her theorisations sought to overcome. As such, the genuine quality and explanatory power of Casanova's work requires re-evaluation, specifically as the very theoretical and methodological tools they were developed as. The idea of this paper is to bring critiques of Casanova's theory and methodology from the Latin American critical field into dialogue with her work once more – a literary field which was treated in some detail in her ambitious study. The intention is to consider where Casanova's theory and methodology stand in light of the potent criticisms of (1) the theorisation, (2) the methodology, and (3) the axial division of theory and criticism apparent in her reception. In the final section of this paper by reapplying Casanova's conceptual and methodological tools, these very discourses can be reinterpreted by exploring the existence of a concentric *academic-literature-world*, extending the dynamics of the literary world to consider how they encompass the field of literary criticism itself.

## 1. CASANOVA'S THEORY AND METHODOLOGY

Put simply, Casanova theorises the existence of a parallel world, the literature-world (or world literary space) with its own *boundaries* (circulation within national, national subspace, linguistic subspace, global, etc. fields), *history* (litarisation of language, periodisation of literature, developmental inequality), *structural mechanisms of consecration* (professional milieu, publishers, translation), *capitals* (London, Paris, New York, Barcelona, etc.), and *agents* (of course, writers of a variety of typologies, as well as those *agents of consecration*: translators, editors, literary agents, and critics). This literature-world is described by Casanova as relatively independent, and yet, inextricably linked to the political and economic realities of the globe<sup>1</sup>, and consequently has a comparably uneven and hierarchical

1. In the conclusion to *The World Republic of Letters*, where CASANOVA chooses to outline some of her literary hermeneutics, she states that the literature-world «is quite separate from the ordinary world, but it is only *relatively* autonomous, only relatively independent of it—which is to say, by the same token, relatively *dependent* upon it» (2007, 349). The materiality and historicity of Casanova's sociological analysis of the literary world is opposed to recent formulations of the «world» in world literature as a purely discursive «phantasmatic projection of cosmopolitan desires», that is, a signifier for the projections or fantasies of marginal authors as non-nationalistic strategies toward literary modernisation (SISKIND 2014, 10).

structure (although Casanova make the explicit point that this ought not be reduced entirely to purely material factors). And yet, despite its inherently hierarchical structure –something in many senses inherited from the Bourdieusian field of power, his concept of relative autonomy, and Casanova's expansion of this field to a global level–, Casanova maintains that these inequalities and relationships of domination are not immutable.

While a number of scholars have correctly recognised a prevalent use of Bourdieu's concepts in Casanova's work (Prendergast 2004; Eagleton 2005; Sánchez Prado 2006; Perus 2006; Franco 2006; Poblete 2006; Damrosch 2013), lacking in many of these responses is a deeper comparative analysis capable of understanding how Casanova's theory «builds explicitly» (Speller 2011, 71) on Bourdieu's theory of fields<sup>2</sup>. On the other hand, it is also worth considering which aspects of Bourdieu's work Casanova implicitly uses or, on the other hand, has not developed as fully and which without considering have led critics to misinterpret her theorisations<sup>3</sup>. One such notion which implicitly underpins much of Casanova's work, but which has been largely overlooked (and been the cause of much misunderstanding), is her implicit use of *illusio*, a term which Bourdieu (2017, 227) uses to speak of the collective belief held by participants in a particular collective «game»: be they believers, scientists or in this case writers<sup>4</sup>. This is very much in operation in Casanova's (2005) clarification regarding her theorisation of the literature-world as both real and rational:

[l]iterary space in all its forms –texts, juries, editors, critics, writers, theorists, scholars– exist twice over: once in things and once in thought; that

2. With the exception, however, of Mads ROSENDAHL THOMSEN'S (2020) recent analysis of how Casanova transposed Bourdieu's national and anthropological theory of fields to the international and specifically literary domains.

3. While this study does not pretend to take up this priority, it is worth mentioning the use of a Bourdieusian critical taxonomy employed by Casanova, such as «field» or «space» («*champ*» or «*espace*»); «consecrating authorities» («*instances de consecration*»); «symbolic capital» («*le capital symbolique*»); «literary capital» («*le capital littéraire*»); «tempo» («*tempo*»); «subfield of restricted production» («*champ de production restreinte*»); «commitments» or by the translator's own admission another more common translation is «position-takings» («*pri-ses de position*»); «career» which the translator preferred to use for the term «*trajectoire*» in the original French text (2007, n11 402), «autonomisation» («*l'autonomisation progressive du champ littéraire*») as well as adaptations of the terms «heteronomous» and «autonomous» which Bourdieu also uses in his analysis.

4. BOURDIEU describes his term *illusio* and its perpetuation in *The Rules of Art*: «The struggles for the monopoly of the definition of the mode of legitimate cultural production contribute to a continual reproduction of belief in the game, interest in the game and its stakes, the *illusio*-of which the struggles are also the product» (2017, 227).

is, in the set of beliefs produced by these material relations and internalized by the players in literature's Great Game (82).

This global literary *illusio* is what Casanova called the «Literary Greenwich Meridian». Like the arbitrary line of Greenwich Mean Time which all time zones are measured in relation to and which organises the *real* world, this Literary Greenwich Meridian exists both in *thought*, through the *illusio* regarding what represents the global modern or the «world» which writers project, and in *things*, as it constitutes and transforms literary production through structural relations to the rest of world literary space (Casanova 2011, 129).

Alongside her theorisation of the literature-world, Casanova proposes her own literary methodology to analyse works both *internally* (through close analysis of the text itself), and *externally* (by seeing how this work and its author are positioned within the broader sub/national/linguistic/regional/world structure)<sup>5</sup>. Casanova is most explicit about this methodological purpose of her book:

My purpose in analyzing the world republic of letters is not to describe all of the world's literature, still less to propose an exhaustive and equally impossible critical rereading of it. The aim of this book is to bring about a change of perspective: to describe the literary world «from a certain vantage point» [...], which is to say to change the point of view of ordinary criticism (2007, 4).

Unlike Moretti's intentionally distant critical vantage point, or Damrosch's questionable position of reading from the perspective of «the world» (2003, 297), Casanova's methodology is at once close and distant, informed by both microanalysis and macroanalysis. It requires an account of the vast large-scale realities of literary spaces such as their position in global hierarchies, economic and political bearings, and literary autonomy. It equally demands an understanding of the author, their *habitus*, and their social, political and literary positioning within these fields, as well as an analysis of authorial position-takings within the literary realm (or others)

5. Toward the end of *The World Republic of Letters*, CASANOVA critically engages directly with Roland Barthes as well as postcolonial criticism (in a general sense) for their emphasis on only one of the two seemingly irreconcilably universes defined in the antinomy between History (the world) and Literature (the text) (2007, 348-51). By applying Casanova's own relational principles, we can see how by critiquing huge bodies of literary criticism Casanova is also positioning her unique methodology and theorisation within the field of literary criticism.

through their texts<sup>6</sup>. Just like for Bourdieu, for Casanova, authors do not exist or produce their works in isolation but relationally, that is, through their relation to other writers and works, established via a multiplicity of *habitués* and position-takings.

Furthermore, Casanova –once again like Bourdieu– constructs a generative model, one which «should be tested by concrete research» (2005, 72). The future of Casanovian analysis, therefore, rests precisely on its capacity to be developed as a model through corrections from its errors or lacunas, adaptations to specific circumstances, nuancing from its simplifications, and a problematising of its most questionable properties, some of which will be analysed and explored here. Only then, through the flexibility afforded through this kind of generative model, will Casanova's theory and methodology retain its considerable explanatory validity.

## 2. CRITICAL CONSIDERATIONS

### 2.1. *Theoretical contestation*

In *The World Republic of Letters*, Casanova provided an impressive bibliography of literatures from vastly distant and varied territories<sup>7</sup>. Nevertheless, as has been noted by numerous critics, the overwhelming majority of authors referenced in Casanova's work reflect a Gallo-centric purview, for their connection either explicitly or implicitly in their affirmation or rejection of European models; through their adoration of the city of Paris; or, for either having lived or being consecrated there. Rather than detailing a genuinely «global» literary network, according to Gustavo Guerrero,

6. These varied aspects, while apparent to some extent in some of CASANOVA's examples in *The World Republic of Letters* such as the Irish case study, are more fully expressed in the ambitious and complex study of Franz Kafka: *Kafka, Angry Poet*. Casanova explains: «It seems to me, first, that in order to work out Kafka's paradoxical position in this international space, it is not possible to confine ourselves to what was happening in the Prague literary space at the turn of the century. We have to take account of the different spaces in which texts and ideas circulated (most notably, the whole of the Habsburg space, the configuration of the German cultural area, the transnational space of Jewish political and nationalist discussion). We have also to bring in the structure of the global literary space» (2015, 8).

7. Christopher Prendergast (2004) estimated that Casanova's citation of authors includes around 700 authors including Western and Eastern Europe, Latin America, the Caribbean, the United States, Canada, North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa, Japan, and the Indian sub-continent.

Casanova details the Latin American literature which has had a specifically «French Connection» (2013). This fundamental problem is propounded by Ottmar Ette, who characterises Casanova's theorisation as a kind of centralisation and hierarchisation of world literature in one's own image:

Todo resulta enjuiciado desde un solo punto, dominado a partir de una sola lógica. El mundo se convierte en un extenso territorio que debe situarse en el tiempo y en el espacio ante un único centro y que debe orientarse hacia una única y, «naturalmente», europea modernidad, la que, a su vez, debe funcionar bajo los mismo valores y criterios, bajo las mismas formas y (más aún) normas [...]. La *République mondiale des Lettres* es un estado sumamente centralizado, sólo capaz de reconocer un tiempo, un espacio, una modernidad y una norma (2015, 339).

Casanova's description of the logics of the world literary structure is, for these critics, a reinscribing of Parisian and more broadly Western centrality, hierarchy, and as the measure of literary modernity. Furthermore, critics like Efrain Kristal (2002) and Ottmar Ette (2014) have charged both Moretti and Casanova for presenting, what they see, as too coherent and simplistic systems of literary hierarchy.

This critique is double-edged. That is, Casanova is criticised as much for not being able to account for the *specific* complexities of contemporary literary circulation, and equally for not creating a model *general* or expansive enough to explain all the world's literature across time and space. In response to this second issue, the classicist and comparatist Alexander Beecroft has constructed a theoretical model capable of assimilating both pre-modern and non-western verbal art. Beecroft's approach considers the study of literature through its circulation and interaction within different «ecologies» (2015, 2). In particular his theorisation of epichoric, panchoric, and cosmopolitan ecologies make his model a more adequate response to the common Eurocentric critique levelled against those models more exclusively focussed on the literatures of Western modernity. As such, while Casanova's and Moretti's models have been judged as incapable of assimilating especially this pre-modern artistic production, their theorisations could, inversely, be conceived as assimilable within the broader Beecroftian model, that is, as more focused descriptions of Beecroft's vernacular, national, and global ecologies. Aware of this complementarity, Beecroft rightly maintains that all of the varied theories on world literature «are not so much competing models for understanding how literature circulates, but rather different concrete answers, emerging in specific contexts, to the same set of problems about the interactions between literatures and their environments» (2015, 3). Taking this into consideration, the efficacy of Casanova's theoretical pronouncements is, perhaps, better evaluated through practical



case studies concerning the literature and contexts from those ecologies through which they were developed, that is, mostly modern vernacular, national, international, and global literary circulations. The limits to this efficacy, however, ought to be measured through concrete testing.

Nevertheless, where these criticisms by Kristal and Ette intended to problematise and characterise the world literary space as more anarchic and decentralised, Casanova had already recognised, to some extent, the mutability of world literary space as a stage of continual struggle and competition<sup>8</sup>. In *The World Republic of Letters*, she notes that the contemporary state of world literary space is increasingly polycentric: with London and New York –and to a lesser extent Barcelona, Frankfurt, and Rome–, competing with or on equal footing with Paris<sup>9</sup> (2007, 164). While it is in many senses obvious that Casanova's claim is that Paris represented the capital of capitals of the literature-world, nevertheless, it constitutes a critical overreach to conclude that she sees this as a permanent or immutable positioning. Casanova's sources which overwhelmingly return to the City of Lights can be interpreted as a means to make the case for considering Paris as the capital of capitals during a *specific* period in literary history (primarily the 18th, 19th, and first half of the 20th centuries), as well as accounting for the *illusios* and discursive acts which contributed to this positioning. Her account of the development of the literary world is not so much of the formation of the space of literature across the whole world in a chronological fashion, but instead a detailing of its *unification* which occurred through colonial means, which in the Western imaginary (which was projected as a universal imaginary) had its centre in Europe, of which France was an undeniably dominant contender in this history<sup>10</sup>. As is apparent in Kristal

8. «[E]ven if the unequal distribution of literary resources assures that such forms of domination will endure, it is also a source of incessant struggle, of challenges to authority and legitimacy, of rebellions, insubordination, and, ultimately, revolutions that alter the balance of literary power and rearrange existing hierarchies» (CASANOVA 2007, 175).

9. «It may be that we find ourselves today in a transitional phase, passing from a world dominated by Paris to a polycentric and plural world in which London and New York, chiefly, but also to a lesser degree Rome, Barcelona, and Frankfurt, among other centers, contend with Paris for hegemony» (2007, 164).

10. CASANOVA herself notes «[a]lthough the space of literature has been constituted more or less everywhere in the world, its unification across the whole planet is far from complete» (2005, 74). Critics have contested Casanova's placing of the «origins» of world literary space within the French Pléiade of 1549, with SÁNCHEZ PRADO (2006) noting how Italian and Spanish vernacularised prior to French, and how even though Casanova references Dante's earlier revolutionary thrust in *De vulgari eloquentia* (1303-4) she insists on focusing a specifically French origin. However, the critiques which suggest that her account of these



and Ette's critiques, Casanova as well as Moretti, have been criticised for the apparently immutable hierarchy of their structure/system. However, in Casanova's case, this criticism is based on a problematic misreading which neglects the Bourdieusian theoretical foundation of Casanova's theorisations, in which it is presupposed that every field, including the field of power and the field of literary production, is a constant field of struggle, and is even directly contradicted in her open acknowledgement that Paris's centrality has shifted in recent times (2007, 164-165).

For some critics, Casanova's Gallo-centric list is also demonstrative of how perspectives on world literature *as an object* as much as *as a paradigm*, are envisioned from national perspectives, in many cases inadvertently. As Ignacio Sánchez Prado has correctly recognised, all world literature theories in recent times have unknowingly posited a specifically national perspective of world literature, as was earlier described by the comparatist Richard Moulton (2006, 30). This predicament suggests the impossibility of accomplishing the apparent desire of the world literature critic to «ponerse en el lugar de "el mundo" y mirar o leer desde allí», as Graciela Montaldo has noted (2010, 120). While it is true that most of Casanova's examples lead back to Paris, however, her account does not exclude processes of canonisation distant to the Parisian capital, such as with her case study of the consecration of the Trinidadian writer V. S. Naipaul (2007, 209-212). Even though the diversity in literary trajectories afforded by her multileveled Bourdieusian study of literary fields could have been more exhaustively accounted by providing more case studies of literary recognition apart from any Parisian connection (such as Naipaul's), the presence of exceptions to this Parisian pattern illustrate the theory's capacity for explaining literary trajectories within a contemporary polycentric structure of the literature-world.

Related to this unconscious national perspective highlighted by Moulton, Guerrero argues that Casanova, in effect, denationalises the capital of Paris and, in so doing, does not allow her study to fully examine how

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origins ought to have considered extra-European, pre-Columbian and Chinese literature (ETTE 2015, 339), seem even less capable of understanding what Casanova's perhaps improperly worded *meaning* is here. As has been noted, Casanova is not detailing the *universal* history of literary production in all spaces and times, nor is she constructing a theory which would be capable of explaining this (as Alexander Beecroft building off Moretti, Casanova, and Damrosch has attempted), but rather, she details the specific history which has led to Paris's centrality: the French language's vernacularisation, nationalisation, and artistic significance in the global era of the 18th and 19th centuries (an area which Casanova analyses in greater depth in *La Langue mondiale*).

the canonisation of texts and authors is impacted by a singular French Parisian perspective, taste, and evaluation (2013, 120). On the one hand, to begin with, Casanova positioned herself on the side of authors from the periphery, and also attempted to challenge and demystify the apparently «universal» perspective of certain European critics, arguing that literariness is a quality produced in literary reception and judged by these critics' own arbitrary and ethnocentric standards (2007, 154). On the other hand, nevertheless, Casanova (2008) has since acknowledged her own inability to escape the national perspective and this very critical ethnocentrism:

In other words, I now take account of the fact that I was –and how could I have hope to escape being?– a pure product of the very structure I had described. I would say that I was spontaneously and decisively inclined, by the mere fact of my French identity, to mix myself up in matters of literary universals (2020, 172).

As such, if the mediation of the national space cannot seem to be transcended, and a position *from the world* is inherently problematic, then the most adequate way to overcome this problem is through self-reflexive critical investigation. That is, the inclusion of critical self-reflection on the national mediation or otherwise on critical preoccupations or perspectives as a fundamental part of Casanovian or any other world literary theorisation and method, a process of critical reflexivity which Bourdieu had already acknowledged as indispensable in the critic's toolkit<sup>11</sup> (2017, 344). This addition will firstly permit critics to become more self-aware of habitual biases, and secondly provide more historical material<sup>12</sup>, which can form the basis of less nationally-partial theoretical proposals, or alternatively, make it possible to augment, modify or improve those frameworks we already have, such as I propose with Casanova's. However, if Casanova's nationally unconscious selection of authors remains problematic, for they might be said to affirm and reaffirm the model she has constructed, then more work, case studies, and data are required to evaluate the effectiveness of her theorisations in their application in distinct fields.

11. BOURDIEU notes, «I think that we only have a chance of achieving real communication when we objectify and master the various kinds of historical unconscious separating us, meaning the specific histories of intellectual universes which have produced our categories of perception and thought» (2017, 344).

12. One such study into the mediation of national perspectives on the reception of Latin American literature in France between 1900-1950 was conducted by Sylvia MOLLOY (1972) and is being continued today by Gustavo GUERRERO in his similar study of the second half of the 20th century, «Medet-Lat France 1950-2000».

Casanova's recent study *Kafka, Angry Poet* is a positive sign that her theorisation is not nearly as Parisian, centralistic or unitary as Ette's criticism has characterised. In this study –which she also conceives as further informing her theorisations–, she details a whole universe of relations at local (e.g. the Prague Circle, travelling drama troupes), national (Czech, Austrian, German), transnational (particularly in regard to the complexity of defining Prague's literary positioning within the immediate literary structure in relation to Austria and Germany, and not at all France), and cultural identity planes (Germanisation and Jewishness), collectively which formed and impacted Franz Kafka's position-takings. As such, Casanova's theoretical position-taking is an approach to literary production and circulation which, rather than approaching literature within an exclusively national setting (although the significance of this is not denied), nor pretending to hold a universal nor global perspective (with all of their abstract problems), is more properly *inter-national*. So, while it must be conceded that Casanova's primary theoretical study suffers a certain measure of ethnocentrism, the conceptual tools utilised in her theorisations can still be used effectively to better inform conceptualisations of world literary space from «the international vantage point» (2015a, 8). This multifaceted, multileveled analysis is grounded in several spaces and attempts to look at the same issue from a variety of vantage points, opening up the panorama of perspectives to provide a more holistic picture of an author's work as it interacts within diverse, complex, and polycentric structures.

## 2.2. *Methodological contestation*

In reading both Moretti and Casanova, Jean Franco raises a methodological contention, criticising them both for devaluing close reading and by having claimed –through their models– to overcome this significant methodology for literary studies (2006, 183). Taking Franco's methodological critique further, cultural studies critic Mabel Moraña argues that Franco and Casanova overlook the textual particularities specific to texts in favour of a «global» outlook which, rather than focus on internal elements, only analyses literature's capacity for participation in the global market (for Moretti), or its proximity to the literary modern (for Casanova) (2006, 328). Moraña maintains that this implies that «[t]anto la propuesta de Casanova como la de Moretti son percepciones que no sólo *constituyen* –construyen *ideológicamente*– al objeto de estudio sino que lo reemplazan» (2006, 329). In other words, Moretti's and Casanova's models appear to both construct and replace the traditional object of study of literary criticism, *the text*, with

the study of the system or structure, and in which texts merely have the function of proving or disproving broader claims made by this theory.

*The World Republic of Letters*, at first glance, appears to confirm this assessment. There is, after all, a scarcity of close textual analysis evident in the book, especially of the kind and depth we are accustomed to in literary studies. This is problematic, at least in so far as Casanova conceivably missed the opportunity to exhibit how her specific methodology executes close reading differently to other methodologies, as one tool among a broader hermeneutic toolkit, rather than being (at times) the only and default tool which it represents for exclusive close reading critics. This devaluation of close reading, however, exists only in appearance and not in actuality.

If we are to consider the multifaceted aims of Casanova's work, then it is possible to understand which sections of her work answer this methodological contestation. The first part of Casanova's analysis represents an ambitious case for understanding literature as a world, and a detailing of its historical unification, structure, and laws –that is: her theorisation. The second section of her book is an application and development of her theorisation through a number of case studies organised into her typologies of authors and literary strategies. Ultimately, all of this theorisation is brought together in her analysis of the Irish case study at the conclusion of this second section in which she states –in some senses anticipating critiques from those literary fields she has treated in less detail–:

Since a precise and detailed description of every literary space is impossible in a work of this scope, however, and in order to avoid an overly abstract description [...] I propose instead to devote a separate chapter to the Irish case, which may serve here as a paradigm, in the Platonic sense, that will give some idea of what it would have been necessary to do to give a complete account of each of the cases already discussed (2007, 302).

This chapter on the Irish case study, along with her texts which most intentionally expound her theorisations and methodology –the English-language preface, introduction, conclusion, additional essays, early and recent critical works such as *Samuel Beckett. Anatomy of a Literary Revolution*, *Kafka, Angry Poet*, and *La Langue mondiale*–, is the suitable territory for determining whether close reading is, in effect, devalued or not by her methodology.

What they reveal is that the close reading methodology in her practice is one indispensable tool among many. While she employs this fundamental method in her analysis of interviews, essays, letters, language, and literary texts, as well as national/non-national themes, and the exposition of aesthetic devices and political discourses across the world, these are not

seen as self-sustaining. For example, Casanova criticises the prevalence of greatly varied and incompatible close readings of Kafka's works, including the common false superimposition of Kafka onto his fictions generated out of the systematic favouring of a biographical interpretation (2015a). Contrary to this idea, and after her own close reading analysis of his narratological devices and macro-level analysis of his context and aesthetic and political position-takings, Casanova concludes Kafka is in fact an «unreliable narrator»: «This narrator does not, as every reader accustomed to the codes of the naturalist story believes, embody the viewpoint of the author [...] but, rather, the perspective Kafka wishes to condemn» (2015a, 208). This conclusion is not only reached via a macroanalysis of social, political, and literary position-takings but through a double historicization (that is, Kafka's positioning, and the unformulated background knowledge of his time), and careful approach to close textual analysis of both non-fiction and fiction texts (attempting to escape the illusion of immediate understanding) (Casanova 2015a, 9-11).

Contrary to the assessment by the above cited critics, Casanova, similarly to Bourdieu, while critical of deconstructionist methods of close reading, creates a methodology which works internally and externally with macro and micro perspectives on the text, the writer, and the various literary spaces of circulation and reception. As such, none of these aspects of analysis –whether they be close reading or the literary or political contextualisation– ought to be disavowed in a sound execution of Casanova's methodology, but rather, all of these levels and analytical dimensions are to interact in a mutually informing back and forth process. Conversely, whether Casanova's methodological stance is interpreted as a devaluing of close reading, or a «revaluing» of external evidence to the heights which close reading analysis enjoys is perhaps also a matter of perspective, as these critiques of Moretti and Casanova by cultural and deconstructionist critics appear to suggest.

Furthermore, Moraña's criticism is one that could be considered anti-theoretical in a more general sense, something which Wilfrido H. Corral and Daphne Patai have similarly critiqued in their edited volume entitled *Theory's Empire: An Anthology of Dissent*. While Moraña is correct in her warning regarding the formalism of Moretti's and Casanova's models –in that they risk becoming self-referential and self-sufficient modes of analysis–, Spanish literary critic Eduardo Becerra makes a very similar critique of

close reading and the continued «colonisation»<sup>13</sup> of cultural studies. Becerra argues that what critics such as Moraña fail to acknowledge is that close reading is responsible for the positioning of literary criticism solely within broader multidisciplinary discourses in which literature is reduced to high culture and representative of power, oppression, and hegemony (2015). While the merits of close reading as a fundamental tool for the literary critic are not to be denied, its sheer popularity and unquestioned status is responsible for a narrowing of the methodological autonomy of literary critics, as Becerra argues:

El problema surgió cuando esta lectura comenzó a generalizarse y a reivindicarse como la única posible, convirtiendo la crítica en la aplicación mecánica de esas recetas teóricas sin que el texto original señale los causas posibles y los límites de la interpretación. El viaje desde los textos hacia su sentido se invierte aquí: el sentido está ya dado en la elección de la forma de leer e interpretar, el texto pierde toda singularidad y se vuelve subsidiario de la teoría, que vuelve una y otra vez a exponer y subrayar sus fundamentos en cada lectura en un viaje de ida y vuelta incesante (2015, 4).

Thus, from this point of view, the default (and oftentimes unthought) close reading position of many literary critics –and the analysis of texts solely as participants in broader discourses of power, identity, and alterity– itself risks constituting and constructing the very object of study, that is, subordinating the text and imposing readings and attaching meanings desired by the critic.

Casanova, in fact, constructs her model in response to these narrowing epistemologies as an attempt to provide a renewed hermeneutic option for the analysis of texts using both internal and external analysis, a methodological position-taking which she herself considers among the autonomous paths available within the discipline of literary studies<sup>14</sup> (2015a).

13. MORAÑA herself refers to the colonisation and political task of cultural studies when she states: «Si bien ya es evidente que los estudios culturales han triunfado en la tarea de colonizar el estatuto de las humanidades y las ciencias sociales, queda aún por probarse su verdadera capacidad de intervención e interpelación política. Esto permitiría saber, una vez desmontada la modernidad, qué hacer con sus fantasmas» (2003, 430).

14. «Parenthetically, I would like to reassert here my desire to operate as a literary critic. It seems to me that, at the intersection of history, sociology (as developed by Pierre Bourdieu) and textual criticism, literary criticism should tend to become a fully fledged social science, not dependent on any other discipline. The essential condition for such a project to succeed appears to me to be a reassertion of a specificity and autonomy of criticism» (CASANOVA 2015a, 7).

### 2.3. *Theory and the role of Latin American criticism*

Ignacio Sánchez Prado questions the Latin Americanist's «traditional» role as merely *responding* to theoretical enunciations generated in the centre and applied to the rest of the world<sup>15</sup> (2006, 8), in a critique in synchrony with earlier critiques made by postcolonial and decolonial critics such as Roberto Fernández Retamar (1975) and Walter Dignolo (1991). This criticism, which Mabel Moraña<sup>16</sup> and Abril Trigo also express, reveals a desire to challenge the epistemological centrality of the Euroamerican pole and the current positioning of Latin American intellectuals –and much of the Global South– as mere commentators. It is as though, Trigo stresses,

[L]as leyes del mercado académico transnacional nos obligan a todos –y muy particularmente a quienes trabajamos desde o sobre la periferia– a involucrarnos en los temas, modelos o agendas propuestos. A entrar en el juego, en un juego que reproduce el juego de la literatura mundial (2006, 89).

This claim clearly presupposes «de que es preferible comprender una región desde un marco teórico autóctono, surgido y desarrollado en esa misma región» (Faber 2006, 137), rather than import foreign theory.

Related to this critique, is the suspicion raised by theoretical proposals which have been developed with only a partial understanding of distant or foreign literary fields, that is, informed by a restricted access to critical works which are *in translation* or which the critic can access through their knowledge of other languages, essentially offering only a partial perspective<sup>17</sup>. As such, Sánchez Prado concludes that «la desigualdad del campo de la crítica literaria es análoga a la de la literatura misma» (2006, 21). When one considers Sánchez Prado's analogy (as this essay attempts to explore further in respect to Casanova's reception), it is possible to appreciate

15. «¿Por qué debemos los latinoamericanos producir respuestas a teorías literarias y críticas configuradas en el centro, en vez de articular nuestras propias propuestas?» (2006, 8).

16. Mabel MORANA adds, in her own words, «el tema de la literatura mundial que nos ocupe puede ser visto como un elemento más, sin duda significativo, que remite a la compleja red de intereses, reacondicionamientos, pugnas y negociaciones dentro del mundo globalizado, donde las áreas culturales luchan por su diferenciación y liderazgo, y compiten por sus campos de influencia» (2006, 326).

17. This is clearly evident in both Moretti's and Casanova's models which Sánchez Prado, Moraña and Perus have criticised for depending on the critical work of only a small number of Latinamericanists: Jean Franco and Doris Sommer in Moretti's case (SÁNCHEZ PRADO 2006, 20), and, Antônio Cândido and the testimony of a number of Latin American authors in Casanova's case (PERUS 2006, 147-148).



this critical suspicion more fully: Western *theory* travels like Western *form* with ease across the academic world regardless of whether it be received, celebrated, critiqued, or rejected, it circulates. While on the other hand, theoretical enunciations from the periphery can remain trapped in their language, be interpreted as parochial in focus without international or universal applicability, or perhaps never be produced out of predominance of Western theory in peripheral academic practice. As Nora Catelli states: «We are peripheral, let us agree upon this. The proof is there: the bibliographies, the indices, the citations. We will not find ourselves or will very rarely find ourselves in them» (2017, 22-23).

Nevertheless, the framing of these Latin Americanist critiques in terms of the circulation of theory between the Global North and the Global South are suggestive of certain critical encampments or even shifts in theoretical receptivity. Catelli argues that the reception of French structuralism and post-structuralism in Latin America (but also the United States) represented a kind of euphoric and inclusive cosmopolitanism, when compared to the reluctant and confrontational cosmopolitanism of Spanish criticism (2017, 21). Catelli illustrates this point in relation to the euphoric Argentinian reception of Barthes<sup>18</sup>, but also the very early translation of French critical theory in Spanish America (predominantly in and through Mexico and Argentina) where Jacques Lacan, Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, Gilles Deleuze, Claude Lévi-Strauss were translated into Spanish even before they were available in English (2017, 13-14). Similarly, Bourdieu, whose sociology has had a considerable influence on certain Latin American academies (most especially in Argentina, Brazil, and Mexico) (Moraña 2014), was also «a full-fledged part of the reception of French critical theory in translation» (Sánchez Prado 2018, 7). What is paradoxical, however, is how this influence did not facilitate a more inclusive or euphoric reception of Casanova's Bourdieusian theory and methodology among the Latin American critics which have been detailed thus far, responses which –to varying extents– seem to treat Casanova's theory and methodology as incongruent with their

18. «The Argentinian uses of Barthes [...] do not refute him but vitalize and amplify him: they are inclusive and serve to reflect on the national, the popular, on language, the narrative tradition, the gaze, the city and even the essence of literature [...] There is the Barthes of Beatriz Sarlo [...] There is the Blanchotian Barthes [...] There is Barthes through the use of whom Argentinian literature reveals itself: José Luis de Diego [...] We include ourselves among all of those readers and users of Barthes, and we in turn revitalize him. We act as true cosmopolitans, without justifying our intrusion in a scene that does not belong to us. Paul de Man, a peripheral European, exclusive and melancholic, rises up against Roland Barthes; we, euphoric and inclusive Americans, amplify him» (2017, 24).

already established theoretical convictions. The cosmopolitan inclusivity of new French critical methods demonstrated by prominent Argentinian critics such as Beatriz Sarlo and even Graciela Montaldo in the last century (Gerbaudo 2017, 97-98), is not repeated in regard to the recent expansion of world literature theories, as is evidenced by the above confrontations with Casanova.

And yet, despite the reasonableness of such a response, it is symptomatic –to a certain extent– of an ethnocentrism, in not evaluating the explanatory value of a theory or model based on the appropriateness and soundness of its ideas and concepts (and their testing and application), but rather on the locus of their enunciation. In other words, as Guillermina de Ferrari argues, this suspicion and dismissal (by Fernández Retamar, Mignolo, Moraña, Trigo and Sánchez Prado) also represents a «rechazo automático de todo debate que no surja de las propias filas» (de Ferrari 2012, 25). The theories and methodologies proposed by Casanova and Moretti, despite the well-founded and well-informed criticism by Latinamericanists and beyond, cannot be logically dismissed entirely due to the origin or nationality of their proponent, as this would represent, at best, a genetic fallacy or, at worst, *argumentum ad hominem*. As such, all extraneous issues aside, when considering this perfectly legitimate assessment by these Latin American critics regarding the structural roles of criticism in global theory, there nevertheless appears a self-defeating contradiction between the euphoric reception of the academic waves of deconstructionism and cultural studies in Latin American criticism –which quite paradoxically also have their origins in French thought–, and the rejection of these most recent models on the basis of their foreign origin.

Furthermore, it is as though, in responding to European and Eurocentric theory, some Latin Americanists have begun proposing similarly ethnocentric proposals, ones which do not necessarily study these theories and their interpretations *on* Latin America as a case study, but claim to articulate theory and commentary *from* Latin America. Marta Puxan-Oliva and Annalisa Mirizio have argued that contexts are not places which only participate in world literature analyses from an «auto-ethnographic standpoint,» but instead «as places from where we think critically» (2017, 7). In other words, in attempting to overcome the issue identified by Sánchez Prado, these critics appear to put forward Latin America *as a perspective*.

However, the implicit philosophical problem with responses like these is they appear to be predicated on the very questionable and questioned idea of Latin American identity and specificity, as well as problematically accounting for this perspective in an ontological sense. These critics would be proposing the possibility of understanding a specifically Latin American

category of *being* and *seeing*, an assertion which while attractive and which perhaps could be considered on a sociological level (as has been done and been the subject of fervent debate for centuries), remains ever more problematic when it is asserted in these essentialised terms. Part of this contradiction is captured by Jeff Browitt in his critique of the decoloniality project:

Mignolo instala una nueva generalización, un «universal» latinoamericano decolonial, si se quiere, al mismo tiempo que desconstruye el concepto de 'América Latina'. La política de la localización no puede superar la misma categoría macro-geo-cultural abstracta –'América Latina'– reconstituida con nuevo ropaje: ahora no como un área de estudios de los Estados Unidos en gran parte desacreditada, sino como el sitio de la 'diferencia colonial' (2014, 36).

One can notice the paradox in, on the one hand, putting forward a postmodern critique of the geography of epistemology, and on the other hand, proposing a quasi-ontological conceptualisation of Latin American-ness, which is itself undercut by the very postmodern thinking which understands identity as being constructed at the social level and not a human understanding of a deeper metaphysical reality. In fewer words, this kind of proposal, by positing some kind of ontological or essential abstraction is either self-refuting or highly unlikely to be demonstrated<sup>19</sup>.

An alternate understanding of Latin American character within the cultural and literary (and academic) fields can, however, be drawn from these reflections. It is clear that Casanova's account of Latin American literary history is not an ordered nor complete account, but rather draws from a few specific periods as case studies to strengthen her arguments relating to the various literary contexts and strategies of authors across the globe to demonstrate, via induction, the existence of the literature-world and her description of its dynamics. Nevertheless, unlike Casanova's numerous other authorial case studies which are treated primarily as national categories over regional ones<sup>20</sup>, the case of Latin America is highlighted as distinct

19. In making these critiques, I am aware of how it appears that I am holding these proposals to a higher philosophical account than the world literature theories I have been discussing, this is not to be misunderstood as partiality, but a recognition of the philosophical grounds of these problematic proposals –which as has been shown– have created the conditions for their own dismissal. Contrariwise, Casanova's theory (as well as other world literature theory proposals) is predicated on a social and literary plane, and thus relies on evidence of these spaces for their inductive –and not a problematically ontological– validation.

20. Conversely, for example, the case studies in geographical Africa are treated first and foremost as Moroccan, Algerian, Madagascan, Ivory Coast, or South African authors, before being defined by any regional category.

for the existence of a category, a label, a space of circulation, or –in a word– a field of Latin American literature as a supranational structure. And while Casanova demonstrates an awareness of the paradox of the Latin American case study as both international region and collection of national spaces in *The World Republic*<sup>21</sup>, she does not interrogate further how this regional space is structured until future works. In Casanova's interrogation of «European literature» as a «space in the making» (2009, 123), she expands this area of her theory to consider «intermediate, supra-national structures, which manage to accumulate resources on a linguistic or cultural basis [...] such as, for example, the Hispano-American space» (127). Despite this development, greater form can be given to this theoretical claim by considering its very implications within Casanova's broader theory.

One consideration, as such, arises in relation to debates over what constitutes Latin American literature. Akin to early 20th Century comparatist debates regarding what constituted world literature –the totality of the world's literary output, on the one hand, or a circumscribed canon defined by a national perspective, on the other (Moulton 2013, 31)–, the question can be seen to resurface at a regional plane for Latin American literary space: essentially, whether Latin American literature amounts to the sum of all literature produced in these national territories (predominantly in Spanish and Portuguese but even this represents a linguistic limitation), or whether it represents a separate more hierarchical supranational and prestigious international category.

Within a Casanovian world literary structure historicised through inherent conflicts and battles waged by writers fighting against their literary invisibility, spaces of circulation and recognition are selective, exclusive, and hierarchical. The dynamics of recognition as a Latin American author certainly appear to be reserved for those authors who transcend their national frontiers and gain recognition (and labelling) via processes of popular and critical rereading. In effect, it as though these authors pass through a process of denationalisation akin to Casanova's concept of universalisation<sup>22</sup>.

21. «Still today the special interest of the Latin American case resides in the concentration of literary capital not only within a national space but within a continental one as well» (2007, 234).

22. CASANOVA speaks of the process of the universalisation of an author's *oeuvre* by how it is produced by the critics who evaluate it: «With Kafka's entrance into the international literary world that anointed him after 1945 as one of the founders of literary modernity, the criteria that were then current at the literary Greenwich meridian –the criteria of the literary present, reactualized by each generation in appropriating texts for its own use: autonomy, formalism, polysemy, modernity, and so on– were applied to his work. Kafka thereby

In the same way in which an author and his or her works can be universalised (or produced as universal) by a pure criticism interested in analysing the apparently universal, immanent, transcendental, or philosophical reflections they might hold overshadowing and supplanting any need to understand the author or the work *in context* (that is national or historical context). Here the process of denationalisation occurs through a process of Latin Americanisation: when a work is determined to incarnate a certain *Latin Americanness* evaluated, firstly, through its ability to represent a perceived version of regional authenticity, and secondly, by its confirmation of having achieved this through its (re)production in criticism and commercial success<sup>23</sup>. Perhaps the most archetypical example in this category during the 20th century was Gabriel García Márquez's meteoric rise during the Boom, and his specific contribution to the regional cultural orthodoxy described by some critics as *macondismo*<sup>24</sup>.

Nevertheless, further complexity can be provided through a combined theoretical approach, already employed thus far, and based on the complementarity between the Beecroftian and Casanovian models. For example, this supra-national structure could be considered in its resemblance to Beecroft's panchoric ecologies, that is, in this case, a space with numerous nodes of contact no longer between small pre-national communities (as Beecroft intended<sup>25</sup>), but precisely between national spaces, in the

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lost all of his national and cultural characteristics, now obscured by the process of universalization» (2007, 353). It could thus be possible to apply this in a similar respect to how writers are deemed to conform to a regional identity discourse by literary intermediaries (critics, translators, reviewers, publishers and the whole cultural apparatus) who produce literary works as belonging to this category of literature.

23. Theo D'HAEN has claimed a similar point in positioning Latin American literature between world literature and *géocritique*, a term he borrows from Bertrand Westphal to suggest that Latin American literature is that which is «intimately responding to, but at the same time also co-configuring, feelings and ideas of «lived» space, and hence contributing to identity formation beyond the national or the stereotype» (2015, 64).

24. José Joaquín Brunner, Néstor García Canclini, and Emil Volek are the major critics who have analysed the impact which the works of the Latin American literary Boom of the 1960s had on Latin American cultural consciousness. They have noted the prevalence of a *macondismo* fundamentalism made up of the images and representations from these important texts and how they have been used to understand Latin American identity. In the literary realm, this cultural orthodoxy would meet resistance across the region especially toward the end of the 20th Century, most viscerally in the polemic anthology *McOndo* (FUGUET and GÓMEZ 1996).

25. Using the ancient examples of Pan-Hellenic and Pan-Huaxia literatures, BEECROFT develops his conceptualisation of panchoric texts, that is, texts «that exist with the explicit aim of asserting common identity across a politically fragmented world» (2015, 69).

production of a regional supranational category of circulation, recognition, and production. It is in this sense, that Latin America's differentiated entry into world literature during the Boom through novels, which despite their nationally-grounded narratives, became part of the process of panchorism, that is, as Beecroft describes: «The construction of a space of shared culture out of a collection of related but distinct local cultures and the creation of new cultural objects [...] designed to speak across those local cultures and, in the process, homogenize them to some extent» (2015, 98-99).

As such, these models ought not be dismissed due to the origin or nationality of their proponent, this would represent an *argumentum ad hominem*, an argument which, if taken seriously, ought to be applied to *any* foreign theory (which is clearly not the case when one considers the disparate euphoric and confrontational receptions of foreign theory in the Americas). What is at stake, however, in these sentiments, is a collapse into national(ist) theoretical and literary analysis once more based on the notion of the irreconcilable singularity of each culture's literary character or perspective. Instead, Casanova's and other world literature models must be critiqued on their own criteria: their applicability, relevance, capacity for complexity and nuance, and explanatory value (which has been put forward) in understanding both the big picture as well as the small picture in various contexts, including the Global South.

### 3. CODA: THEORISING AN ACADEMIC-LITERATURE-WORLD

This critical discourse, particularly evident in these three predominant critiques (although not limited to them)<sup>26</sup>, parallels similar debates and discussions within the literature-world, a number which have already been

26. Another critique which was proposed by Latin Americanist critics, but which does not fit into the scope of this paper, was the claim that Casanova creates a separate and autonomous literature world, or at the least overstates this autonomy. This critique can itself be interpreted as an attempt to re-politicise and re-economise the apparently separate literature-world, within a politico-economic conceptualisation. That is, those interpretive methods where texts are continually interpreted and reinterpreted as discursive interventions into politics or for their manoeuvrings of commercially viable forms, trends, and circulation, within a critical mindset where everything is political or commercial. However, to clarify, CASANOVA (2005), rather than entirely autonomise the literature-world, theorises a synthesis which would no longer collapse all forms of domination under the political and economic standard, but to consider domination in its various forms: political, economic as well as linguistic and literary.



foreshadowed in the sections above. While many of the speculations that will be drawn in this coda are supported by pre-existing sociological analyses of the academic field and in line with recent applications of Bourdieu in this burgeoning field (Biegel 2013; Heilbron and Gingras 2018), I suggest that Casanova's Bourdieusian theorisation also holds promise for this field of research even as a «practical instrument» (Casanova 2020, 170) as we consider the structure, inequality, and struggles apparent for academic literature as a concentric category within the literature-world, or what could be termed the academic-literature-world.

Firstly, world literature theories have been critiqued for their hypothetical global vantage point, which, in practice, has been determined to more closely resemble a global perspective mediated by a national standpoint. And while in the literary world described by Casanova, the force of the national pole may conspire against an author's literary autonomy to transcend national referents and themes, similarly in the academic-literature-world, theorists, in spite of their best intentions, equally appear to struggle against a national pole which mediates their analyses<sup>27</sup>, something which Casanova's work even exemplifies and something she herself recognised in the preface to the 2008 edition of *La République mondiale des lettres*. It is in recognising this prevalent issue that a thorough practice of Bourdieusian critical reflexivity can be employed to avoid or reveal critical ethnocentrism, as has been argued.

Secondly, the methodological contestations raised by a number of critics can be equally reinterpreted in the context of the *illusio* of literary theory in the academic-literature-world. In the literary world, oftentimes the newest literary generation or avant-gardes or even an uncanonical literary mode is disapprovingly compared to their literary elders, the classics, or the current literary canon or standard. As Bourdieu argues, «[t]he new entrants are bound to *continually banish to the past* [...] those consecrated producers against whom they measure themselves and, consequently, their products and the taste of those who remain attached to them» (2017, 157-158). So too, in literary criticism, when a dominant critical method

27. I am not favouring an approach which would classify academics into «semi-scholarly taxonomies» like the kind which BOURDIEU critiques in *Homo academicus* (1988, 12-13), rather I defend the potential benefit of Casanova's rigorous relational and multiperspectival approach to an analysis of agents in the academy, but also as a process of Bourdieusian reflexivity such that «[w]hen research comes to study the very realm within which it operates, the results which it obtains can be immediately reinvested in scientific work as instruments of reflexive knowledge of the conditions and the social limits of this work, which is one of the principal weapons of epistemological vigilance» (1988, 15).



such as close reading or cultural studies is challenged by a new critical method which implies the incompleteness or unsuitability of the former, a methodological conservatism is apparent in critiques of it. This is not unlike the process which Thomas Kuhn posited in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, that the discovery of scientific anomalies throughout the history of science have progressively transformed the discipline through a series of paradigm shifts. Furthermore, the same discourse on literary autonomy in Casanova's literature-world, is paralleled in the academic-literature-world with discussions on critical or methodological autonomy in light of the so-called colonisation of disciplines such as cultural studies and default heuristic positions such as close reading. As such, it is possible to identify strong parallels between the space of (theoretical) possibilities available to a critic in a given locale and mediated by national academic trends, as well as commercial interests in the academic-literature-world, and the panorama of artistic position-takings available to writers and equally mediated by analogous forces in the literature-world.

Thirdly, in Moretti's and Casanova's models, literary centres and capitals are often the point of origin and almost always the point of recognition and international circulation of the most modern literary forms and aesthetics. Equally in the case of the academic-literature-world, researchers and academics from the periphery are accustomed to receiving and responding to European criticism and theory, which is deemed universal, as much in the social sciences (Mosbah-Natanson and Gingras 2018) as in the natural sciences (Beigel 2013), –once again as part of the academic-literature-world's *illusio*– effectively reproducing an axial-division of labour: theory or «originality» from the West, and commentary for the rest. This kind of inequality is also apparent in the unequal exchange in the process of translation whereby «[i]n a circular fashion, the more prestigious a language becomes, the more resources it acquires, the more profit its use provides in the linguistic marketplace, the more it is used for translations, the more it expands its power» (Casanova 2015b, 129). This cycle, inclined toward the perpetuation of existing linguistic hierarchies, represents a greater obstacle within the academic-literature-world, where the reduced marketplace and profitability for academic publications has a bearing on the limited number of translated titles introduced into those most prestigious and internationalising academic languages.

This quandary is both acknowledged and yet still inadvertently replicated in texts such as *América Latina en la «literatura mundial»* which were designed to respond to these new theories and methods. However, there are attempts to overcome this positioning, such as in Sánchez Prado's most recent edited volume, *Pierre Bourdieu in Hispanic Literature and Culture*,

where this concern is explicitly reframed away from a dynamics of unequal theoretical power relations to a more equal relation of interlocution, dialogue, and critique (2018, 5). This represents one text among a recent number from Latin Americanists demonstrating a certain level of development in the academic field, such as in the series *Latin American Literatures in the World/Literaturas latinoamericanas en el mundo* edited by Gesine Müller with De Gruyter<sup>28</sup>, or even the proposal of theoretical development or reformulation in the area of world literature by Mariano Siskind (2014), Héctor Hoyos (2015), and Ignacio Sánchez Prado (2018). Nevertheless, even while these proposals may define themselves in a relationship of difference to the predominantly Western theories which reinvigorated the study of world literature (Casanova, Moretti, and Damrosch), in some senses these works nevertheless inhabit a space –as much in the theoretical field of possibilities as in the commercial book market– created by these Western theorists who first pioneered this burgeoning approach within the academic-literature-world.

The issue of this peripherality can also be self-imposed, much like in Casanova's model where writers most concerned with their national issues, controversies, and representation, often struggle to transcend into global circulation, remaining relevant only within a limited space<sup>29</sup>. Analogously, a research field defined as an area study such as «Latin American studies», produces the potential of a self-imposed heteronomous force, because the concerns of such studies invariably relate to (and can become limited to) Latin America, or even risk, at times as has been shown, amplifying national or regional discourses regarding cultural specificity<sup>30</sup>. But this status is also

28. This series has been a fruitful source of research on Latin American literature informed by world literary studies, and to date includes five volumes: *Re-mapping World Literature* (MÜLLER *et al.* 2018); *Landscape's Revenge* (YURGEL 2018); *De la literatura latinoamericana a la literatura (latinoamericana) mundial* (LOCANE 2019); *World Literature, Cosmopolitanism, Globality* (MÜLLER *et al.* 2019); and *Literatura latinoamericana mundial* (GUERRERO *et al.* 2020).

29. As BEIGEL has rightly noted, while recent transformations in the production and circulation of research which may have reduced these hierarchical inequalities have been most evidenced in the natural sciences, on the other hand in the social sciences and the humanities «sigue existiendo una estructura desigual tradicional» (2013, 116). Furthermore, Beigel and Sari HANAFI (2011) have also highlighted the tension experienced in the academic periphery between existing in one's own national academic field and not existing at the global level, or conversely publishing in more central academic capitals to the potential detriment of local recognition.

30. This norm of specificity has certainly been studied in other disciplines such as in Fernanda BEIGEL's assessment of scientific inquiry in Latin America within this unequal

reproduced by a paradigm in which theoretical perspectives or methodologies which *go global* invariably tend to arise in the West, gain purchase in Western academies, are written in dominant academic *linguae francae* (e.g. English, and to a lesser extent French and German), and thereafter circulate in the academies of the Global South for commentary: a state of affairs which the reception to Casanova's *Le République mondiale des lettres* in many senses has confirmed.

Furthermore, the time lag in the internationalisation of Southern theory is similarly analogous, if not worse, than the challenges which dominated writers experience in their own internationalisation. So while theories applicable at global levels and originating in Latin America have in recent times demonstrated this is achievable yet dependant on translation –such as with dependency theories and the decolonial approach–, perhaps what Latin Americanists still require to go «theoretically global/universal» in the academic-literature-world, is an analogous Jorge Luis Borges<sup>31</sup>, to revolutionise the *status quo* of the traditional hierarchies, transform the *illusio* and conceptions of Western universalism, to define an alternate present to our current one.

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academic system, a region which at times experienced «[u]na corriente nativista, casi telúrica, [que] completó este trabajo de autoculpable minoridad, exigiendo a este conocimiento autóctono, además, una esencia propiamente nacional» (2013, 111).

31. This invocation of Borges is a suggestive and potentially helpful metaphor for thinking about this academic conundrum. BORGES, in his essay «El escritor argentino y la tradición» challenged the problem –deemed by him to be only an apparent obstacle– of the expectations of nationalism and parochialism placed on the Argentinian writer. He instead reappropriated the universal as his heritage claiming «[p]or eso repito que no debemos temer y que debemos pensar que nuestro patrimonio es el universo; ensayar todos los temas, y no podemos concretarnos a lo argentino para ser argentinos: porque o ser argentino es una fatalidad y en ese caso lo seremos de cualquier modo» (1957, 162). Learning from this, Latin Americanists as such, by virtue of their positioning at the margins of Western universalism as well as learned and read in its theorisations–and analogous to similarly postcolonial theorisations which have gone global such as Edward Said and Homi K. Bhabha's, although under different circumstances–, are highly suited to creatively develop strategies for internationalising their theories and methodologies, were they to distance themselves from parochialisms and desire for differentiation and authenticity, and reach for greater theoretical transcendence, as Borges suggested and in many ways accomplished himself through his fictions.

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